

***Amendments to the Claims***

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A method of [[providing]] electronic document retention ~~for an electronic document~~, comprising:

- (a) assigning a document retention policy to the electronic document, the document retention policy being based on a future event that is unscheduled; and
- (b) cryptographically associating, using a cryptographic key, the document retention policy with the electronic document.

2. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

- (c) determining whether the future event has occurred; and
- (d) cryptographically preventing access to the electronic document in accordance with the document retention policy based on the occurrence of the future event.

3. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein: ~~step (e)~~ the determining is periodically performed periodically.

4. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein: ~~step (e)~~  
the determining is performed by comprises interacting with a network accessible  
resource.

5. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein: ~~step (e)~~  
the determining comprises is performed by interacting with a web accessible resource.

6. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein ~~step (e)~~  
the determining comprises:

supplying a future event description of the future event to the web  
accessible resource; and  
determining, at the web accessible resource, whether the future event has  
occurred.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein said  
supplying is achieved by a universal resource locator associated with the future event  
description.

8. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein ~~step (e)~~  
the determining comprises:

supplying the future event description to a contract management system;  
and  
determining, at the contract management system, whether the future event  
has occurred.

9. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein[[::]]  
~~step (b) utilizes a cryptographic key to associate the document retention~~  
~~policy, and~~

the document retention policy specifies a document retention period based  
on the future event.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the  
document retention policy specifies a document retention period that expires a  
predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the future event.

11. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 9, further  
comprising:

(e) deactivating the cryptographic key in response to determining that  
~~when~~ a document retention period has expired, thereby preventing further access  
to the electronic document.

12. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 11, further  
comprising:

(e) permitting the deactivating step (e) to be overridden so that the  
electronic document can remain accessible even after the document retention  
period.

13. (Previously Presented) A method for restricting access to an electronic document, said method comprising:

identifying an electronic document to be secured, the electronic document having at least a data portion that contains data;  
obtaining a document key;  
encrypting the data portion of the electronic document using the document key to produce an encrypted data portion;  
obtaining a retention access key, the retention access key being used to enforce a document retention policy on the electronic document;  
encrypting the document key using the retention access key to produce an encrypted document key;  
forming a secured electronic document from at least the encrypted data portion and the encrypted document key; and  
storing the secured electronic document.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the retention access key is a public retention access key.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the document retention policy is dependent on a future event that is presently unscheduled, and the retention access key is used to enforce the document retention policy on the electronic document.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 15, wherein the retention access key is subsequently available from a remote key store only so long as a document retention period of the document retention policy has not been exceeded.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 16, wherein the document retention period is a predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the future event.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein said method further comprises:

extending the predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the future event.

19. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim [[15]]16, wherein said method is performed on a client machine that operatively receives the retention access key from the remote key store over a network.

20. (Original) A method for accessing a secured electronic document by a requestor, the secured electronic document having at least a header portion and a data portion, said method comprising:

obtaining a retention access key, the retention access key being used to enforce a document retention policy on the electronic document;

obtaining an encrypted document key from the header portion of the secured electronic document;

decrypting the encrypted document key using the retention access key to produce a document key;

decrypting an encrypted data portion of the secured electronic document using the document key to produce a data portion; and

supplying the data portion to the requestor.

21. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the retention access key is identified by an indicator within a header portion of the secured electronic document.

22. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the retention access key is a private retention access key.

23. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein, if permitted, said the obtaining a retention access key comprises obtaining obtains the retention access key being obtained from a server, wherein the server determines whether the retention access key is permitted to be provided to the requestor based on the document retention policy.

24. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the document retention policy is dependent on a future event that is presently unscheduled, and the retention access key is used to enforce the document retention policy on the electronic document.

25. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the retention access key is available only so long as a document retention period of the document retention policy has not been exceeded.

26. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the document retention period is a predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the future event.

27. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the retention access key is available from a remote key store only so long as a document retention period of the document retention policy has not been exceeded.

28. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the retention access key is available only so long as a document retention period of the document retention policy has not been exceeded, the document retention period can be extended to permit extended access to the electronic document.

29. (Currently amended) A method for distributing cryptographic keys used in a file security system, said method comprising:

receiving a request for a document retention key that is necessary to gain access to a cryptographically secured electronic document;  
identifying a document retention period associated with the document retention key, the document retention period being dependent on a future event

that was unscheduled when the document retention period was associated with the electronic document;

determining whether the document retention period associated with the document retention key has been exceeded; and

refusing to distribute the document retention key in response to the request when said determining indicates that the document retention period for the electronic document has been exceeded.

30. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein the document retention period is a predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the future event.

31. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein said method is performed at a server, and wherein the request for the document retention key is from a client module that is connectable to the server via a network.

32. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein the document retention period can be extended to permit extended access to the electronic document.

33. (Original) A file security system for restricting access to electronic files, said file security system comprising:

a key store that stores a plurality of cryptographic key pairs, each of the cryptographic key pairs including a public key and a private key, at least one of the

cryptographic key pairs pertaining to a retention policy, the retention policy being dependent on a future event; and

an access manager operatively connected to said key store, said access manager determines whether the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy is permitted to be provided to a requestor based on whether the future event has occurred,

wherein the requestor requires the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy to access a secured electronic file, and wherein the secured electronic file was previously secured using the public key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy, and at the time the electronic file was so secured, the future event was unscheduled.

34. (Previously Presented) The file security system as recited in claim 33, wherein said access manager prevents the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the predetermined time from being provided to the requestor after a predetermined retention period following the occurrence of the future event.

35. (Previously Presented) The file security system as recited in claim 33, wherein the requestor is a client module that operatively connects to said access manager over a network.

36. (Currently amended) The file security system as recited in claim 33, wherein said file security system further comprises:

at least one client module, ~~said client module assisting a user configured to assist in selecting the retention policy[[],]~~ and ~~secure said client module securing~~ the electronic file using the public key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs pertaining to the retention policy so as to cryptographically impose the retention policy.

37. (Previously Presented) The file security system as recited in claim 33, wherein said file security system further comprises:

at least one client module, said client module assisting with unsecuring the secured electronic file by acquiring the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs that pertains to the retention policy from said key store if permitted by said access manager, and then unsecuring the secured electronic file using the private key of the at least one of the cryptographic key pairs that pertains to the retention policy.

38. (Currently amended) A tangible computer readable medium ~~including at least computer program code for having instructions stored thereon for providing data retention for electronic data, said computer readable medium the instructions comprising:~~

instructions to assign computer program code for assigning a data retention policy to the electronic data, the data retention policy being based on a future event that is unscheduled; and

instructions to cryptographically associate, using a cryptographic key, computer program code for cryptographically associating the data retention policy with the electronic data.

39. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 38, wherein ~~said computer readable medium~~ the instructions further comprise~~comprises~~:

instructions to cryptographically prevent computer program code for cryptographically preventing access to the electronic data in accordance with the data retention policy based on the occurrence of the future event.

40. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 39, wherein the electronic data is an electronic file.

41. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 39, wherein the electronic data is an electronic document.

42. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 38 wherein[:]

~~said computer program code for associating~~ operates to utilize a cryptographic key to associate the data retention policy, and

the data retention policy specifies a data retention period based on the future event.

43. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 42 wherein:

the data retention policy specifies a data retention period that expires a predetermined period of time after the occurrence of the future event, and

~~said computer readable medium~~ the instructions further comprise~~comprises~~:

instructions to determine computer program code for determining whether the data retention period has expired; and

instructions to deactivate computer program code for deactivating the cryptographic key ~~when it is determined in response to determining~~ that the data retention period has expired, thereby preventing further access to the electronic data.

44. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium as recited in claim 43, wherein ~~said computer readable medium~~ the instructions further comprise~~comprises~~:

instructions to permit deactivation of the cryptographic key ~~computer program code for permitting~~ the instructions further comprise~~comprises~~ so that the electronic data can remain accessible even after the data retention period.

45. (New) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein the determining comprises:

supplying a future event description of the future event to the network accessible resource; and  
determining, at the network accessible resource, whether the future event has occurred.

46. (New) The method as recited in claim 16, wherein said method is performed on a server that operatively receives the retention access key from the remote key store over a network.